recruited, ex-trade apprentices are given preference and to that extent the trained youth is utilised.

Modernisation of ordnance depots

†2536. SHRI D.P. YADAV: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scheme under Government's consideration for modernisation of major Ordnance Depots of armed forces in the country;

(b) the total number of incidents of fire taken place in Ordnance Depots during the year 2001-2002 alongwith the total loss of lives and property therein; and

(c) whether Department has formulated any comprehensive scheme to check recurrence of incidents of fire in future; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Government of India have decided to modernize all the seven Central Ordnance Depots located at Agra, Mumbai, Chheoki, Delhi Cantonment, Dehu Road, Jabalpur and Kanpur in a phased manner. However, to begin with modernization of Central Ordnance Depot, Kanpur involving an expenditure of Rs. 187 crores approximately has been taken up. This project would be completed by December, 2003.

Four incidents of fire have been reported in Ordnance/ Ammunition Depots during 2001-2002. The estimated loss of arms and ammunition, Government property and human lives in the fires/

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

blasts in Ordnance/Ammunition Depots during 2001-2002 is as under:—

Sl. No.	Ordnance/Ammunition Depots	Date of Incident	Estimated loss of arms, equipment and property	Loss of Human life
1.	2 Ammunition Sub Depot, Memoon, (18 Field Ammunition Depot) Pathankot	29.4.2001	Rs. 27.69 Crores	0
2.	2 Ammunition Sub Depot Bridhwal (24 Field Ammunition Depot), Ganganagar	24.5.2001	Rs. 375.04 Crores	1
3.	Ordnance Depot, Shakurbasti, New Delhi	3.6.2001	Rs. 2.87 Crores	0
4.	Central Ordnance Depot, Jabalpur	6.8.2001	Court of Inquiry is in Progress	0

Following steps/remedial measures have been taken to ensure safety and security of Ammunition/Ordnance Depots:—

(a) All depots have been directed to update safety and security instructions.

(b) All depots have been inspected by a Board of Officers to check adequacy of safety and security arrangements.

(c) Shortages in fire fighting equipment are being made up and defective equipment repaired.

(d) Unserviceable ammunition is being disposed of on priority.

(e) Allotment of additional fund has been made for creation of more Explosive Store Houses for shifting ammunition presently stored on plinths under canvas.